

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 00639 081146Z

43

ACTION NEA-13

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 IO-14 OMB-01 DRC-01 /118 W

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R 081049Z FEB 74

FM USINT CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5275

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 639

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS EG

SUBJECT: PRESS CENSORSHIP LIFTED

1. AHRAH HEADLINE FEB 8 IS "SADAT ORDERS ABOLISHMENT PRESS CENSORSHIP." LEAD STORY, BYLINED ALI AMIN, STATES PRESIDENT WILL LIFT ALL CENSORSHIP ON ON-MILITARY MATTERS AS OF SATURDAY, FEB 9. SECOND FEATURE IS ANNOUNCEMENT POSTPONEMENT OF CABINET CHANGE UNTIL AFTER LAT ISRAELI SOLDIER IS EVACUATED FROM THE "HOMELAND" (WATAN). THE "HOMELAND" IS NOT FURTHER DEFINED, BUT THE WORD WOULD NORMALLY BE INTERPRETED BY EGYPTIAN READERS AS MEANING ALL EGYPTIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING SINAI.

2. ARTICLE GOES ON TO SAY THAT THERE HAVE BEEN IMPORTANT MEETINGS DURING THE LAST TWO DAYS "SOMEWHERE" IN THE DESERT, AT WHICH "SOME ARAB PERSONALITIES" HAVE BEEN PRESENT.

3. USINT UNDERSTANDS THAT ALI AMIN IS THE ONLY JOURNALIST TO HAVE VISITED SADAT IN HIS DESERT RETREAT (BURJ AL-ARAB?) TO WHICH, WE HAVE HEARD, HE HAS GONE TO ESCAPE FROM, AMONG OTHER
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PAGE 02 CAIRO 00639 081146Z

THINGS, THE PETITIONS OF AFRICANS ASKING FOR GOE HELP IN

OVERCOMING ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF OIL EMBARGO.

4. LIFTING OF PRESS CENSORSHIP HAS BEEN A SURPRISE TO
CAIRO JOURNALISTS, AND SEEMS INCONSISTENT WITH THE RECENT
GOE CLAMP DOWN ON EXPRESSION OF DISSIDENT OPINION IN AHRAH.
"FREEDOM OF THE PRESS" IS A SLOGAN WHICH HAS ALWAYS HAD
RHETORICAL POPULARITY IN EGYPT BUT HAS RARELY MEANT VERY
MUCH. DEPT WILL RECALL SIMILAR ZAYYAT ANNOUNCEMENT
LAST YEAR WHICH CAME TO NOTHING. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN
IF CAIRO EDITORS WILL BE ABLE TO DEVISE A SELF-CENSORSHIP
PROCEDURE CONSISTENT WITH GOE SENSITIVITIES.
EILTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CENSORSHIP, THE PRESS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 FEB 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974CAIRO00639
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740247/aaaabrng.tel
Line Count: 73
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <13-Aug-2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <26 NOV 2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS CENSORSHIP LIFTED
TAGS: PINS, EG, (AMIN, ALI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005